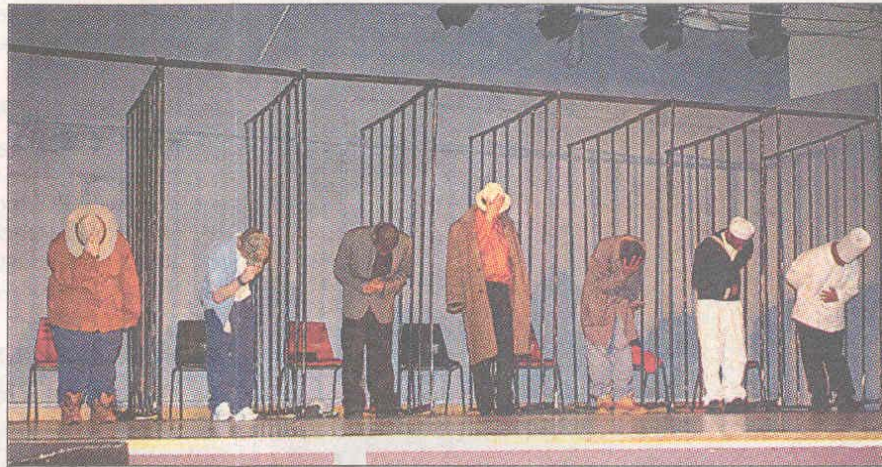


LIVINGSTON LIFE



A 'dream for the future'

Annual dinner theater at Maxey depicts life at the juvenile detention center and students' hopes for after they leave

Past musicals have showcased comedic talents, but this time youths at the W.J. Maxey Training School wanted people to see what it's like to be in the Green Oak Township juvenile detention center.

"My Dream for the Future," written by dramatic arts teacher Ken Fischman, headlined the April 8 public dinner theater at the state juvenile detention facility in Green Oak Township.

"It hit a little closer to home than our past performances," said Fischman, a 10-year Maxey teacher. "It shows that even though you put people away, they're not thrown away. They're motivated to get themselves out."

Accompanied by a prime rib or salmon meal prepared by youth in the school's culinary arts program, the show played before a crowd of about 100 people.

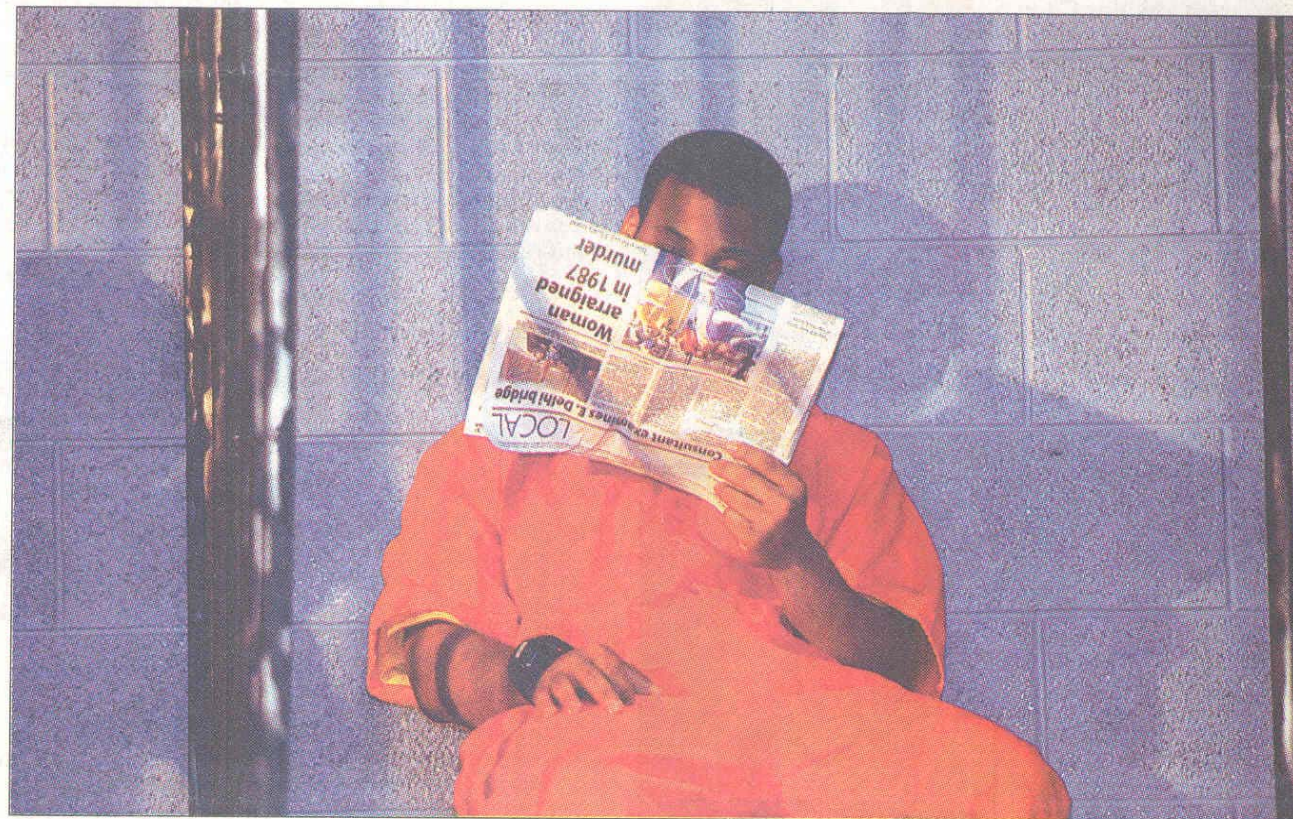
The public performances began two years ago and have seen attendance rise to the point that Lee Craft, Maxey's education director, hopes they can be expanded to two nights in the future.

"We have people calling after every performance to praise the show," Craft said. "A lot of them say it's a step above typical student theater."

"My Dream for the Future," features seven teens as actors and two more as stage technicians. It begins with the actors entering through the rear of a darkened auditorium while singing "No One Knows Who I Am," from the Broadway musical "Jekyll & Hyde."

They approach a stage starkly decorated with cells. Through song and dance, they give a 35-minute presentation on their plans to become a cowboy, minister, record producer, mechanic, factory worker, chef and member of the U.S. Navy.

"It touches on family, religion and career, which all are issues these kids struggle with," said Derek Hitchcock, Maxey's campus director. "It's a well-rounded picture of the



PHOTOS: JAMIE CHARBENEAU-PISELLA, THE LIVINGSTON COMMUNITY NEWS

Students at the Maxey Boys Training School put on a dinner theater each spring. The meal is prepared by students in the culinary arts program, and students in the drama club act in the show. This year's production was the original "My Dream For The Future."

challenges of rehabilitation."

Even though he has real dreams of becoming a nurse, Rashan, who's been at Maxey for six years and performed in four of its shows, portrays the record producer "Kid Dyno."

"I've come a real long way," he said. "And this show tells people that no matter where you come from or where you go you still can make something of yourself with hard work. We all get second chances."

Walter, due to be released in May after spending six years in Maxey, works in the kitchen and serves the dinner theater meals he's helped prepare. But he has performed in several past shows.

'This show tells people that no matter where you come from or where you go you still can make something of yourself with hard work.'

Rashan, Maxey student and actor

"It lets a whole different you come out," he said. "A lot of the people here didn't have normal childhoods. They al-

ways had the responsibilities of adults. Seeing them act and get excited about it releases a whole different person."

Along with its drama and culinary arts programs, Maxey offers vocational training in graphic arts, robotics, auto mechanics, cosmetology and more.

"We have great programs all the way around," said Paul Wolshon, culinary arts teacher. "Each person brings a specialty to each program and we all teach these young men the best way we can to leave here and have a successful future."

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